

1/7/71

Dear Paul,

With a few moments before I have to leave for two days, I want to amplify the information I began to relay in last night's note and to add what evolved in a discussion between Bud, Jim and me in Washington yesterday. We had a short meeting in Bud's office after my therapy was completed (the should may yet require shots of some kind) and until he had to leave for an appointment.

As you have proudly come to understand, there was, from the very first, been the widest disagreement between me and Bud on most things. Where we had disagreements over legal matters, I always yielded to him, even when I disagreed, and, although I'd probably do the same things again under the same circumstances, cannot think of a single case in which mine ~~my~~ was not the correct judgement. We have also disagreed very strongly about publicity, and he has gone hisway, getting it and, as he seems to have come to realize, accomplishing nothing by it. At his office ~~some~~ party we had a rather violent disagreement over something Smith had holed up. It was sufficiently strong for Bud to leave Jim, Smith and me in his office and get out. It is at this point that he apparently started doing some rethinking, for a week later I got a cartoon of what I had encouraged him to do as an alternative to the publicity-seeking. We have not discussed that since.

The Archives never sent or gave them the lists or documents they sent you and me. That they didn't send the lists, with all the work Bob alone has done there, seems to me to make at least the hair of an eyebrow.

There were other things important for us to go over, and Jim and Bud are coming here Saturday for that, for when I mentioned my concern over the potential of what I'd gotten and your wholesale advertising of it after you got it, they shared it, esp. as lawyers. When you consider that this means Bud had to acknowledge the deepest doubts about the irresponsibility of what those to whom he has been so close, his closest members of his committee, and this for the first time to my knowledge, perhaps you can evaluate, for whatever it is worth, the hazard in this stuff.

They had read your generally-distributed letter, but I did not take the one you wrote me to them. Bud had spent two days with Hilton and returned with a feeling that is no better than mine. I presume from what he said that Hilton both pumped or tried to pump him and at the same time owned him. I gave no such indication of belief to Bud, said nothing of him except to ask Bud's opinion. It is that he is both sick, very sick, and just as dangerous. But to get to one of my stronger objections to the wholesale distribution of everything, they agree that at best the use of some of this stuff can be expected to be harmful in court, perhaps in Congress (where they have been small but significant changes of attitude recently), and that Mitchell's dissemination of the Vance material has to be questioned, for it can't be explained in any reasonable, legal manner. I found them using the words of my thinking, like "booby-trap".

Before Bud had to leave we did not have time to discuss everything. After he left, Jim and I continued. The three of us agreed that there should be a careful screening of everything now released, to see where it may present hazards, if and where we can, and to try and determine where the motive may have been to encourage its use to forestall carrying investigation forward or to discredit. We were all troubled by the seeming interpretation that if one of us gets something and doesn't make it available to everyone, there might later be (wrong)charges of our suppression, but reached substantial agreement on the fact that this would not be correct for whatever we get is available to everyone who might ask for it. For example, we send Skolnick ~~myth~~ nothing, but all he need do is write the Arch. and he can get it. Despite his feeling about Garrison he agreed on two things: it would be bad, as you said, for him to get and use what we not have and your mailing makings it inevitable that he will learn about it in sufficient detail to make use if he desires. I am hoping that he will not now have the desire.

One of my concerns was for more efficient and expeditious cooperation. He said he would phone Arch on his return from his appointment and agreed to my proposal: If Arch has not yet gotten what he ordered, he will ask the Archives to make it available to Ted for him. Jim will immediately copy in 30, where on full-size reproduction his price is close enough to yours not to justify bothering you, then send to you. The delay, if any, in this reaching you will be negligible and it may, in fact, speed it up. They will make a copy for me and collectively we will screen immediately.

Especially in the light of the curiously-delayed letter to me, designed to reach me after I went to LA, did they think we could not ignore the possibility of changes in the declassification. - have, as you should recall, faced this before. We agreed that there should be no expression of interest in anything released until it is all copied. We also agreed on the need to inventory the CD list, rather than the pages-released list, and Jim started that yesterday pm., with Don to continue last night (Don doesn't think the " is capable of this, or that Johnson can do anything shady! Even when I cited cases.) So, we'll have a double check on what is copied, and then there will be a check of the pages part. Don thinks he can get some students to help.

Finally, I was surprised at the degree to which Bud's thinking on some things has changed, as with publicity, where he has always been real gang ho. Even with the Ferrie stuff, which he also seems as quite significant and a reaction to the planned suit for it. I will not be writing the obvious questions to which he agreed when I outlined them-remember, I did file a DJ-113 for this and appealed to Mitchell, who only recently, perhaps after the declassification was made, rejected it.)

I will not know what, if anything, was accomplished until Saturday. And I now have to leave. I close with a repetition: we must rethink our courses of conduct and our attitudes in the light of the many changed situations, political, legal, Congressional, and the potential of the information already in hand where a main cover is under way. For example, although I haven't told you, I have a Congressional offer. - have to decide whether or not it is now premature. I tend to think it still is. and - for the practical use of any of this stuff, so to combine several purposes, - have tentatively decided that my first course of action must be to put together the essence of the medical data, most if not all of which I've sent you, so that the uninformed can understand it. Until the copies of the am. material are available to me (and I'm buying myself for a set of copies), once I return and after whatever has come in since today, I'll try and get on that. I'll drop it to cover the new stuff.

I do hope you will, as I have asked, reconsider your own approach to being well-intentioned wholesaler, and I spare you similar. Try, for a change, asking yourself not "Am I right?" but "Can I be wrong?", and if you agree it is possible that maybe you can be wrong, then ask yourself to consider the worst that can happen and compare this with the best you can hope for with this kind of wholesaling of what we already know contains poison.

Status report on the clothing/pix suit: I could more as I could have for almost two months that it be moved to the head of the docket, meaning immediate trial. But raised the question again yesterday and I said I'd rather give them all the rope possible. He agreed. I am firmly of the opinion that in most areas, the last thing we now want to do is rush, and I do practice it, even though with a forthcoming book, publicity serves its own, personal, constructive end.

Since city,